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ABSTRACT

This essay addresses the ethical justification for arts education as a component of equal education. The paper traces evolution of equal education opportunity ideas in general and specifically as equal opportunity for arts education. While it is currently considered inequitable to provide an arts education to some and deny it or provide it in disparate terms to others, several definitions of equity are possible. Policymakers requiring some standard by which to determine whether differences in arts education constitute disparity, may look to standards employed by legal courts. Of nine definitions of equal education, presented by Arthur E. Wise in 1967, the Negative Definition that indicates that educational opportunity exists when it is not dependent upon parental economic status or place of residence, is one most likely to be upheld in litigation. Another definition that has an impact on the education of the arts is The Full Opportunity Definition, which requires that all students be developed to the limits of their ability. The Foundations and Minimum Attainment definitions provide the least support for arts education as the former measures dollars spent, while the latter places an achievement ceiling on students. The Leveling Definition requires that the greatest instructional resources and attention be directed to the least able. This contrasts with the Deserving Definition that allocates resources in direct proportion to the students' ability. Other definitions include: The Equal Dollars per Pupil Definition, The Maximum Variance Ration Definition, both of which allow a range of deviation from exact equality of expenditure; and The Classification Definition that requires suitable programs for students of specified characteristics, and availability of those programs to every student with corresponding characteristics. Alternate proposals by John W. Wick call for a sincere attempt to avoid imposing educational plans on students without careful regard for their entry skills, abilities, and needs; and indicates that quality is measured by outcomes. As educational resources become limited, arts education will need to understand the range of implications these competitive equal opportunities standards present to the field. A summary of these implications concludes the essay. Contains 31 references. (MM)

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Arts Education as Equal Educational Opportunity: The Evolution of a Concept

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Abstract

This essay considers the evolution of the concept of equal educational opportunity for arts education. The discussion includes a review of the evolution of the idea for education generally, its evolution for arts education, the modern meanings of equal educational opportunity, and its implications for arts education practice and advocacy.

Introduction

As the Congress struggles to agree upon the content of a new Civil Rights Bill, and as communities across the country likewise grapple with local legislation initiatives designed to provide equity, equality, parity, and fairness for a variety of minority interests (racial, linguistic, cultural, and sexual), the American public is called upon once again to reconsider these founding principles of our country. This is neither novel nor surprising, for these principles are, and always have been, evolutionary. Each era and generation has defined for themselves what equity, equality, parity, and fairness mean.

In times such as these, when strained fiscal resources in the public sector are a pivotal concern of people everywhere, such ideals give way too often to expedience. Perhaps it is at such moments in our history that philosophical work of this sort is most needed and most valuable, indeed practical. Each interested group must offer their contributions to the meaning of these ideals for their enterprise. It follows, then, that the task of arts educators is to examine the meaning of equity, equality, parity, and fairness for public education generally and for arts education specifically.

Discussions of equity in an educational context traditionally have fallen under the banner of "equal educational opportunity." The central question of equal educational opportunity has been one of fairness. If the government is going to provide some educational benefit to one group or individual, should they not provide it for all? The question belies a set of relatively modern assumptions about equity and equality, assumptions which have historical antecedents dating back to the Equal Protection Clauses of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

While the literature of music education is filled with elegant philosophical rationales for arts as a basic subject which addresses a discrete human intelligence and which informs sentient cognition (aesthetic justifications), (see note #1) there is very little philosophical consideration for the provision of arts education as equal educational opportunity (ethical justifications). To paraphrase the central question offered above, if the government is going to provide an arts education benefit to one group or individual, should they not provide it for all? This omission in the arts education literature is ironic, for most other education interest groups (racial minorities, handicapped children, gifted children, women) have a rich literature of this sort (citations to follow). This paper will attempt to advance such discussion for arts education. (see note #2)

There are four parts to this discussion. The first two briefly trace the evolution of the ideas of equal educational opportunity and

equal opportunity for an arts education respectively. The third section sifts through the wide range of modern definitions of equal educational opportunity which have emerged in recent studies of the topic. The final segment offers some implications of these definitions for arts education practice within the profession, and proposes some implied strategies for the promotion of arts education as equal educational opportunity to the public at large.

The Evolving Idea of Equality in General Education

The ideas of publicly supported, formal education and equal educational opportunity are relatively recent in mankind's history. In pre-industrial Europe, life and economy revolved around the family. A child's station in life was defined to a large degree by the family into which he happened to be born. Education was not considered a vehicle of social mobility. Indeed, social mobility was not valued. Rather, the child was considered a part of the family production enterprise and would likely remain so for life (Coleman, 1974, p.4). The family insured that the child acquired the necessary skills to function in the family enterprise. The equality of that education with a neighboring family was a moot issue. Rather, children were provided with a differentiated educational opportunity best suited for their family responsibilities and social station.

In U.S. history, the ideas of equality and a free, public education often are traced to Thomas Jefferson. His *Declaration of Independence* announced that, "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal...." But Jefferson's ideas concerning equality for all men are not consistent with twentieth century understandings of these ideas. Jefferson clearly did not mean all men. He did not mean women, children, handicapped people, nor African slaves.

We do know now that his notion of equality derived from an eighteenth century view of the uniformity of each species on the biological ladder and that equality, for him, was derived from what was presumed to be man's highest faculty, the "moral sense." That moral sense was the source of human accountability, he believed, and the basis of human rights. This did not prevent him from making distinctions between persons of superior "parts and disposition" and other persons when he proposed a school system for the diffusion of knowledge in Virginia, nor from asserting that "twenty of the best geniuses will be raked from the rubbish annually, and be instructed, at the public expense, so far as the grammar schools go" (Greene, 1982, 4-5).

For Jefferson, school was a place to acquire the skills necessary for survival and to gain sufficient literacy to participate in self-governance.

The Industrial Revolution brought with it fundamental change in the way families functioned, the degree to which they equipped their children for their life's work, and the degree to which one's social station was a function of inheritance.

As economic organization developed outside the household, children began to be occupationally mobile outside their families. As families lost their economic production activities, they also began to lose their welfare functions, and the poor or ill or incapacitated became more nearly a community responsibility. Thus, the training which a child received came to be of interest to all in the community, either as his potential employers or as his potential economic supports if he became dependent (Coleman, 1974, p.4).

The scope of public education expanded in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries both temporally and functionally. The temporal expansion included the addition of a public secondary school as well as a kindergarten. Compulsory attendance laws followed. The traditional function of education likewise expanded as schools assumed roles formerly understood as the domain of other societal institutions (such as the family and the church). This change in function implied change in the school curriculum.

A common curriculum had been an implicit assumption in the meaning of equal educational opportunity in this country until the beginning of this century. But with the expansion of public secondary education, and the large influx of non-college bound students, the need arose to modify the "classical" or liberal education, common at that time, in response to the cry for a more "practical" or vocational one (Coleman, 1974). Hence, two tracks were introduced into the educational system, creating, by definition, an unequal educational process. Debate about the appropriateness of such an educational design "...dominated discussion of educational policy until mid-century" (Kirp, 1982, p. 37).

In addition to the disparate education within schools which the two-track curriculum provided, a U.S. Supreme Court case declared near the turn of the century that railway cars, and by analogy schools, could be racially segregated provided they were "equal" (*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896). The differences between the two curricular tracks described above within white schools did not begin to approach the profound differences in schooling offered to the children attending black schools when compared to white schools. This action of the Court had the net effect of sanctioning gross inequality between schools.

In the 1950's, the cry arose for greater comprehensiveness and academic rigor in the American high school (Conant, 1959). The national alarm had sounded with the Russians' launch of Sputnik. Americans, in the throes of the Cold War, perceived themselves to be losing the race for technological supremacy. The source of these problems, it was argued, was in the schools, the two-track curriculum was alleged to have lowered the academic standards of American schools and thus made them less competitive globally.

James B. Conant responded to this national alarm by proposing to centralize further the educational process, offering a more expanded version of the two-track system to create a setting in which the needs of the increasingly diverse population could best be met. The means by which these reforms could be achieved was

the "comprehensive high school." Many of the smaller high schools simply were not able to provide the range of educational opportunities necessary for the expanding population of U.S. secondary schools. By consolidating the many small high schools into fewer, larger, comprehensive ones, the resources would be distributed more efficiently and the means by which to preserve a general education for the majority of students, while also strengthening the academic, pre-collegiate track, would be in place.

It was also during the 1950's that the U.S. Supreme Court revisited the *Plessy* decision concerning racial segregation. In the landmark case of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* (1955), the Court reversed their earlier decision and declared that "separate is inherently unequal." This action of the nation's highest court began an era of racial equalization of education which is still under way.

Perhaps the most remarkable development in the evolution of educational opportunity--the research that turned the idea of equal opportunity away from vocationalism and upward social mobility toward underlying ethical issues--was the 1966 publication of what is now called "The Coleman Report" (Coleman, 1966). The principal finding of the report was that "...no matter what the quality of teaching in a school and no matter what the resources available, the important variables, when it came to 'equalizing' were family background and economic condition (Greene, 1982, p.19).

Six years later, Jencks and his colleagues (1972) released the results of their three-year study, which echoed the Coleman Report. Neither school resources, nor cognitive skills, nor educational credentials explained variations in occupational earnings in later life. "...the evidence suggests that equalizing educational opportunity would do very little to make adults more equal" (Jencks, et al., 1972, p.255).

But perhaps more compelling than these research findings is the alternative conception of education equity which then emerged in American educational philosophy. Jencks recommended that

Instead of evaluating schools in terms of long-terms effects on their alumni, which appear to be relatively uniform, we think it wiser to evaluate schools in terms of their immediate effects on teachers and students, which appear much more variable. Some schools are dull, depressing, even terrifying places, while others are lively, comfortable, and reassuring. If we think of school life as an end in itself rather than a means to some other end, such differences are enormously important. Eliminating these differences would not do much to make adults more equal, but it would do a great deal to make the quality of children's (and teachers') lives more equal. Since children are in school for a fifth of their lives, this would be a significant accomplishment (Jencks, et al., 1972, p.256)

Greene took the argument a step further when she proposed that

...the focus ought to be on beginnings, not the end-points or products of predefined competencies with which we are preoccupied today. Beginnings, the taking of initiatives in inquiry and learning, the reflective pursuits of meanings that may illuminate lived lives: these ought to be the concerns of schools committed to equality (Greene, 1982, p.20).

Defining equal educational opportunity as a concern about processes rather than outcomes represented an important shift in

American educational philosophy, with important implications for arts education in the public schools. As will be noted in a subsequent section of this essay, definitions of equal educational opportunity which focus on what the literature now calls "input characteristics" or processes provide a vigorous framework in which arts education can find a central place--a place in which its grossly disparate provision could be viewed as unequal, inequitable and unfair.

However, while this new conception of equal educational opportunity continues to unfold, it likewise coexists with earlier, perhaps more familiar understandings of the term across the country. The idea of equal educational opportunity clearly continues to evolve.

The Evolving Idea of Equality and Arts Education

Just as the notion of educational opportunity has evolved from one of differentiated opportunity, to one of separate-but-equal schools, to one of racially integrated but unequal schools, to schools which find themselves challenged to examine processual and qualitative concerns, so the place of arts education has evolved in this country. Whereas, several centuries ago, artistic pursuits and studies were understood to be reserved for the aristocracy and the high church because of the differentiated educational opportunity and culture clearly understood to be appropriate to the ideals of the pre-industrial era, today a considerable literature exists which places a central importance on the arts for all members of or society, and which even suggests that the arts must be a central component in any definition of equal educational opportunity.

Including the arts in the U.S. public school curriculum began in the 1830's ("Boston School Committee...[1837]," 1983). Formerly, education in the arts was understood to be a matter for the church or for private tutoring (Leonhard and House, 1972, 55). However, by the turn of the century, larger cities had gone so far as to require "...music, drawing (to develop ability for accurate representation), and art appreciation (the study of art history and the lives of artists)" (Banfield, 1984, 118). The champions of Pragmatic philosophy, promoting knowledge to guide behavior and the use of problem solving method, did much to expand the place of music, in particular, in the school experience (Leonhard and House, 61-62). However, by the turn of the century, larger cities had gone so far as to require "...music, drawing (to develop ability for accurate representation), and art appreciation (the study of art history and the lives of artists)" (Banfield, 1984, 118). The champions of Pragmatic philosophy, promoting knowledge to guide behavior and the use of problem solving method, did much to expand the place of music, in particular, in the school experience (Leonhard and House, 61-62). Coupled with advances in broadcast, recording, and print technology, making the world of the fine arts more widely accessible, the importance and pervasiveness of the arts for the general population, and subsequently for the common curriculum, grew (Leonhard and House, 65-67).

In fact, the national commitment to the presence of the arts in all the schools and for all the children has risen to such a degree that national governmental standards now exist for categorical funding projects. Citing the *Federal Register* (vol. 40, no. 126), Engel listed the seven national criteria for making arts and education programs acceptable (1977). Among the more striking of these were the requirements that all students receive access to all art areas incorporating all modes of experience (appreciation,

enjoyment, understanding, creation, participation, and evaluation), and that arts be placed in the regular school curriculum, not the extra curriculum (Engel, 63). Roughly thirty states now require by law the inclusion of art in the curriculum (Banfield, 120) while roughly forty states require the inclusion of music in some fashion ("Arts Requirements," 1991, 16-17).

Education philosophers likewise mention the arts when discussing educational opportunity and educational balance. Eisner points out, for example, that all of the more than forty national studies of educational excellence and effectiveness which have appeared since the early 1980's have recommended a substantial place for the systematic study of the arts in the formulation of a basic and balanced curriculum, not because of the utilitarian influences of the study of the arts on the other "more basic" components of the curriculum, but rather because of the central place of the arts in the human experience (Eisner, 1987, 38). (see note #3)

The major argument for the arts in education is

...that since humans experience and give expression to their most deeply held values, beliefs, and images through the arts, there can be no adequate form of general education that does not include them (Eisner, 1987, 38-39).

Indeed, there appears to be such a considerable consensus concerning the importance of arts education for all children that in recent years the professional and political literature has argued for arts education in the context of equal educational opportunity.

Equity of educational opportunity cannot be provided if some children are not given the chance to use and develop their most potent intellectual abilities. By diversifying the forms or representation that are made available in school and by according them a status equal to the status now accorded the three R's, we might be able to expand the success that some children achieve in school to those who now find schools places in which only particular, limited varieties of human ability count. Students who are told both formally and informally, implicitly and explicitly, covertly and overtly that their particular interests and aptitudes are unimportant, that they are nonintellectual, that they will not be taken into account when the students are seeking admission to a university are being denied equal education opportunity (Eisner, 1982,80).

Specific interest groups likewise have made a claim for the central importance of the arts for the schools. Groups concerned with the handicapped (Appell, 1978), women (*Multicultural Non-sexist Education*, 1980) and the socially and culturally disadvantaged (Pierce, 1979) have built a substantial literature documenting the evolution of the place of the arts in the schools to that of high priority, perhaps even entitlement.

To summarize, just as the idea of equal educational opportunity has evolved dramatically, so too the idea of the place of arts education as an input characteristic in the public schools has evolved. The pervasive position of the arts in the vast majority of American schools, the escalating mandate for arts education for all children, and the spiraling role of the federal government in making arts available for all citizens, seem to combine to make increasingly challengeable its denial or grossly disparate provision to the children of some districts within a state.

Modern Definitions of Equal Education Opportunity

If it is true that the evolution of the idea of equal opportunity for an arts education has evolved sufficiently in our culture to suggest that it is unfair, inequitable, unequal, and therefore, unacceptable to provide an arts education to some and deny it or provide it in grossly disparate terms to others, then it follows that education policy makers require some standard by which to determine whether differences in arts education provisions constitute an unacceptable, perhaps even unlawful, disparity. The following discussion will review the writings of two influential researchers who have considered just such questions in broad educational contexts. (see note #4) An attempt will then be made to close this discussion by applying these principles to arts education questions.

WISE AND WICK

Before considering how manageable it is to define equal educational opportunity, or more to the point, to determine when equal education opportunity is absent, it is helpful to consider first which policy makers will need to apply such definitions for policy deliberations. Public education (and indeed most of public life) was once far more decentralized than it is now. The nation has evolved from a agrarian culture to a highly urbanized one. In the last 90 years, the number of public school districts in this country has declined from over 200,000 to less than 20,000. Per capita representation on school boards has eroded as well. These factors, among others, have created a contentious, and often litigious, public. William Hazard observed that

Over the past two decades state and federal courts have exercised increasing influence on school policy making and, by pre-emption, have taken the policy making play away from local boards in many important issues. In particular, the application of law to school conflict has changed our perceptions of the role of the school board in policy making. School board decisions are rarely accepted these days as the last word; more and more, citizens regard them as the trigger for legal confrontations. Put another way, schooling is no longer regarded as a take-it-or-leave-it proposition but is viewed, along with the policies supporting it, as an offer negotiable in court. As a result, educational policies are the product of constitutional, statutory, and case-law interpretations (1978,12).

Given this modern scenario, it seems reasonable to focus then on those definitions of equal educational opportunity which the courts have, or might, find compelling. For regardless of whether the courts will become involved in such questions (in fact they already have), policy makers at the school board and legislative level will be influenced heavily by standards which a court could manage.

In his landmark study of the constitutionality of intrastate, interdistrict disparities in per-pupil spending, Arthur E. Wise derived a set of nine possible definitions of equal educational opportunity the courts might employ in consideration of litigations regarding the allocating of educational resources (1967). The definitions included:

The Negative Definition

Equality of educational opportunity exists when a child's educational opportunity does not depend upon either his parents' economic circumstances or his location within the state.

The Full Opportunity Definition

Every person is to be given full opportunity to develop his abilities to their limit.

The Foundation Definition

...stipulates a "satisfactory minimum offering," expressed in dollars to be spent, which shall be guaranteed to every pupil. Such a program guarantees every child equal educational opportunity up to a prescribed minimum.

The Minimum Attainment Definition

...asserts that resources shall be allocated to every student until he reaches a specified level of achievement

The Leveling Definition

...asserts that resources should be allocated in inverse proportion to students' ability.

The "Deserving" Definition

...asserts that educational resources should be allocated in direct proportion to students' ability...The more able a student is, the greater should be his access to society's scarce resources.

The Equal Dollars Per Pupil Definition

...society is obliged to grant an equal amount of its scarce educational resources, as measured in dollars, to the education of every individual.

The Maximum Variance Ration Definition

...allow a permissible range of deviation from exact equality in expenditures.

The Classification Definition

...requires first the specification of "suitable" educational programs for students of specified characteristics. It then requires that each program be made available to every student with the corresponding set of characteristics wherever he lives in the state. The classification definition thus specifies that there is to be equality for all within a classification (Wise, 1967, p.145-158).

Of these, Wise felt that the courts likely would select the Negative Definition to determine the presence or absence of equality of educational opportunity, in that it is "...consistent with the rationales employed by the Court" regarding treatments of African Americans, indigent criminals, and voters by the state (Wise, 1967, p.158).

John W. Wick proposed an alternative rationale to those listed above in the consideration of equal educational opportunity, which may be summarized as follows. All parents, students, teachers, administrators, etc. want their schools to be "quality" schools. "Quality" in this sense means more than simply possessing some characteristic which distinguishes it from others not sharing that characteristic.

Wick began his discussion noting that:

Quality is not measured by rate, as in the case of productivity: quality is measured by outcomes (1986, p.422).

Although quality may have as much to do with perceptions of excellence as it has to do with outcomes which might lend themselves to quantification, when it comes time to render policy

decisions, nevertheless, quality in education is for Wick a function of outcomes of schooling. It is a term suggesting excellence or superiority. No one wants equally bad educational opportunities. People want equally good educational opportunities.

Wick identified four viable approaches to the evaluation of such "quality-with-equity" (Wick, 1986, p.422). The first approach called for the tempering of expectations to make them consistent with predictive input characteristics. This approach acknowledged that findings of Coleman and others regarding the predictive correlations between socio-economic status (as an input characteristic) and educational outcomes. Under this plan, educational goals would be generated in light of these external or status variables.

The second approach called for the examination of a school's programmatic responses to the needs of students. This is a two-step process, in which one first explores the degree to which the curriculum matches the needs of the incoming student population.

A public school cannot develop programs, then seek students to fit programs: the student is the independent variable here, and it is the programs which must conform (Wick, 1986, p.429).

One then looks to see if the means are in place by which to match these programs with the students who most need them. Wick highlighted in this discussion the distinction between establishing entry-level skills necessary for the successful learning experience in a course, versus screening and sorting. The guiding issue is whether or not the student has these necessary entry-level skills, as opposed to traditional sorting technique criteria such as completing a prior course, or completing that course with a certain grade and receiving a teacher recommendation, etc.

The third approach examined the quality of instruction as an input characteristic, although higher quality instruction would be expected to be linked to educational outcomes. The final approach addressed what Wick called instructional efficiency. Expressed in efficiency ratios, these measures look like productivity ratios, except that they are unitless. Examples offered by Wick included: opportunity-to-learn minutes per class minutes; number of correctly spelled words per words attempted; minutes spent at the wheel per minutes in a driver-education class (Wick, 1986, p.431).

Wick concluded that the use of the second, third, and fourth approaches to equal educational opportunity would be appropriate, advisable, and need not be exclusive (Wick, 1986, p.432). Equal educational opportunity, for Wick, must imply quality of educational opportunity as well. It must begin and end with the students' needs, strengths, and background. It must assume a high level of instruction. It must not imply sorting of students.

Implications and Strategies

This very cursory review of the modern definitions of equal educational opportunity reveals several things. First, there is a richness to the ideas begin considered by those working to refine and advance this concept. Second, this richness provides such an array of choices and approaches to the task that one easily can find it confusing, frustrating, discrepant, and elusive. Finally, because arts education has focused its philosophical work on aesthetics agenda, these concepts are likely to be foreign to arts educational research specialists.

The central task now is to close this discussion by considering implications specific to the arts education professional which emerge from the larger set of issues in the literature of equal educational opportunity. It is a formidable task, deserving volumes to do the topic justice. However, these closing remarks will attempt to identify and clarify some of the major themes of particular relevance to arts education. These implications speak to professional practice in arts education and to advocacy of arts education to policy makers in terms of equity, equality, parity, and fairness.

First, it is clear that the idea of equal educational opportunity is a vital and evolving concept. Tracing its history in Western culture, both in general and arts-specific contexts, provides substantial evidence to support that tenet. The history of other cultures could provide equally compelling proof. The acknowledgement of the evolutionary character of this idea is a first step in recognizing that it will continue to evolve. And while there have been several unfortunate regressions in its history, most would agree that the evolution of equal educational opportunity has been steadily more inclusive, more conspicuous, and more just. It also seems obvious that arts educators have an important role to play in the promotion and guidance of this evolution.

Second, most definitions require an expansion of current arts education practice. Closer scrutiny of several of the modern definitions cited above supports this tenet. Wise's Negative Definition implies, at minimum, that arts education inputs should not be a function of the district in which you happen to reside. If vigorous arts education programs are in place in some communities of a state, they should be in place in all communities within that state.

Wise's Full Opportunity Definition represents perhaps the largest expansion of arts education for it requires that all students be developed to the limits of their ability. This implies an individual education plan typical of PL 94-142 for all children. Once needs and abilities of each student are identified a strategy must be developed to achieve those objectives. This would mean a substantial expansion of arts education resources, especially at the secondary level where only 15% of the student population participates in systematic arts instruction. While, on its face, this sounds outrageous and extreme, the courts have been known to embrace just such a definition. In the West Virginia Supreme Court, for example, the judiciary ruled that

Legally recognized elements in this definition are development in every child to his or her capacity of (1) literacy; (2) ability to add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers; (3) knowledge of government to the extent that the child will be equipped as a citizen to make informed choices among persons and issues that affect his own governance; (4) self-knowledge and knowledge of his or her total environment to allow the child to intelligently choose life work--to know his or her options; (5) work-training and advanced academic training as the child may intelligently choose; (6) recreational pursuits; (7) interests in all create arts, such as music, theater, literature, and the visual arts; (8) social ethics, both behavioral and abstract, to facilitate compatibility with others in this society.

Implicit are supportive service: (1) good physical facilities, instructional materials and personnel; (2) careful state and local supervision to prevent waste and to monitor pupil, teacher and administrative competency (*Pauley v. Kelly*, 1979). (Emphasis added)

• The court offered little assistance in defining such terms as "develop" or "capacity" further, however.

The Foundation and Minimum Attainment Definitions provide the least support for the invigoration of arts education (or for any other education curriculum, for that matter). The former equalizes dollars spent (typically dollars adjusted to account for fiscal overburden), while the latter places an achievement ceiling on students. Once students have reached that academic achievement ceiling public support of their education stops. The latter has received far less support in public circles, but it is extremely conservative fiscally and may gain favor in public circles as the strain on public monies worsens.

The Leveling Definition would have the most unusual impact on music education programs in particular, for it would require that the greatest instructional resources and attention to be directed to the least musically able. It is an equal educational opportunity definition which seeks to promote educational intervention to offset the "natural" difference which children bring to the public school experience. It contrasts most notably with the Deserving Definition of education as meritocracy. Because many school music programs seek to identify and attract the most musically able into the performance program, design instructional plans which cluster students by ability, and offer the greatest "rewards" in terms of festival ratings, touring, performance opportunities, etc., to these talented young artists, the Leveling Definition would require a reexamination of many of the most "sacred" assumptions of music education practice.

Wise's Characteristic Definition parallels closely Wick's "quality-with-equity" definition in which educational programs are derived from carefully assessed student needs. This is not to be confused with the Full Opportunity Definition discussed above, for it does not mandate that each student be developed to their capacity—rather that a sincere attempt to make avoid imposing an educational plan on students without careful regard for their entry skills, abilities, and needs. While there are standardized tests available to assist with such an undertaking for arts education, they are used very seldom in such diagnostic ways. To embrace such a definition for public schooling in the arts would require substantial change in professional practice.

Several regions of the country are revisiting the education voucher option in an attempt (1) relieve strain on state education budgets, (2) provide education choices for the general public, and (3) allow schools to "compete in an open market" so as to improve standards of public education. This option is a form of equal educational opportunity as either an Equal Dollars Per Student or Maximum Variance Definition. Moves in this direction have had the effect of reducing the opportunity for many students to receive systematic, sequential instruction in the arts. Schools posturing themselves as "science/math schools" or "engineering schools" or "pre-med schools" in a site-based management scheme have elected to delete arts instruction from the curriculum. Schools in dense urban settings have found themselves unable to afford to provide much more than minimal curriculum components due to the municipal overburden (the high cost of doing business in such settings). Educational philosophers and jurists alike have observed that approaches to educational equity which promote disparate educational funding or disparate education purchasing power in the name of choice seldom provide real choice or parity (Serrano v. Priest, 1976). Arts educators will want to watch these developments very closely.

The literature of equal educational opportunity provides a meaningful basis for articulating the importance of arts education for all children. It resides in the larger literature of educational philosophy and will be more familiar to education policy makers than aesthetic arguments. Indeed, the issues are less sophisticated and more accessible. If the governmental benefit of an arts education is going to be provided to some children, should it not be provided for all children? On its face, fairness and equity would argue that it would.

This is not to diminish the validity and significance of aesthetic arguments. For more than twenty years, they have provided a philosophical foundation which has dispelled much insecurity for the arts education profession, and have offered much guidance in the continued growth and maturity of the discipline as well. But as resources for public education continue to diminish, as the American population continues to age, and as competition for such limited resources becomes more combative, arts education will need to have considered the full range of arguments likely to surface in the deliberations concerning the appropriation of education resources, and will need to understand the range of implications which they present to the profession.

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Notes

1. Two celebrated examples include Gardner (1983) and Reimer (1989).
2. For a more expanded discussion of this topic readers are directed to the author's dissertation (1990) from which much of the material in this article is drawn.
3. For an insight into the extent of the contrast of this philosophical justification for study of the arts to earlier views, see (Report of special committee [1837]..., 1982, 134-43) as an example of a utilitarian justification for the place of music in the schools.
4. Space does not permit a more exhaustive review of the many positions on this question here. These two authors have examined the most influential approaches to the question, however, and serve to provide a helpful summary for the purposes of this article. In addition to these two researchers, readers might wish to review (Collins, 1970; Larson, 1972; Mercer, 1979, and Silard and White, 1970).

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9